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852 Most of the morning is spent in preparing the taro. The child's mother is with the other women from Amb[illegible] working on the taro. The baby is lying on a bed inside the house, and beside him lies his mother's father, who is patting him soothingly and affectionately.

852 252 The women and little girls old enough to be of assistance are busy scraping the skin from the taro with their shell implement (*tsip*), halving them, sprinkling them with shredded coconut and water, and then wrapping eight or ten of them in large leaves, securing the whole bundle by tying it with a piece of hardy vine. At the same time the men make the fires, bring in the leaves for the wrapping of the taro, shred the coconut, prepare a pig, fish, and turtle to be baked. The busiest of all the men are the infant's mother's brother, his grandfather, and his father. It is his mother's brother, or sometimes his maternal grandfather, who is master of ceremonies.

About noon all the preparations are completed. The bundles of taro, fish, pig, and turtle have all been put in the *liga*, a pile of hot stones serving as a bake oven. There are four *liga*, one near each group of women who have been preparing the taro. Many of the women now go in and look at the child. They fondle it, crow over it, and then pass out of the house and sit down at the place where they had previously been working. Now they take their ease. A few doze, others chatter. An old woman from Langania tells how one of her children is very skilful at getting crabs for her. Another one laughs as she tells how her child, who is about three or four years old, said he was an old man. Then they talk a bit about the new baby for whom this feast is being held; particularly about his good health. While they talk they munch a taro which has been baking separately on one of the little fires which are always kept burning, apart from the *liga*. One woman has just lifted a taro from the fire, and beats it with a stick (always done to

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taro which is not cooked in the bundles), and as she beats she tells how she did not want her son to marry because she thought he was too young, but how he did marry anyway. She appears amused with the incident, and tells it rather as a good story, showing no evidence of chagrin.

After about two hours or so of this lazy conversation, fourteen Ambwa women appear in the open clearing in front of the house where the infant now lies. They are gaily decorated with *kerapo* leaves stuck in their hair and in their armbands (*biuk*). Seven of the women belong to the Eagle moiety and seven to the Hawk, and they now do the *Kanduro* dance. It is a dance done in two-line formation; one line is made up of the Hawk women, and the other of the Eagle women. One Eagle woman (same moiety as the infant) leads the others in. She beats a bamboo pole with a stick and stands in front of the two lines of women and addresses the Hawk women in an angry tone: "You Hawk women have come. Now, we have no women. All the Eagle women have died. We have no Eagle men here either." This, I am told, is not true, and everyone knows it. It is just "talk play," a kind of polite depreciation, and is customary at this rite.

Then follows the dance. Maerabit, from Lesu, as usual plays the part of the jester, and rushes on the scene beating a drum, circles around the dancers, and goes through many absurd antics, maintaining a serious countenance at the same time. The effect is quite droll. She has a real sense of gaiety and rhythm in her movements. The audience greets her antics with loud shouts of appreciative laughter.

When the dance is over another group of women of the Hawk moiety, married to men of the clan to which the infant belongs, come on the scene, each carrying some food utensil. One by one they make a speech about the abilities of their husbands as food providers. One woman holds up a basket, saying: "My husband gets much food at

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the house of the dead person. These include usually the following: real and classificatory sons and daughters and their spouses, brothers and sisters, parents, nephews and nieces. This period of abstention from sexual intercourse lasts about three weeks and its end is marked by a feast. The initiative in terminating this period is taken by a clan relative (a brother in several cases observed). He holds the feast and at it announces the discontinuance of the sleeping taboo. During the time when these sex taboos are enforced all those implicated live in the hamlet where the death occurred. They not only sleep there, but cook, eat, and spend their entire time at this hamlet. One death occurred in the hamlet next to the one in which I was living, involving most of the people in my hamlet, which was consequently deserted for the three weeks following the death. The men spend their time sitting around the cemetery, talking and doing nothing. Their conversation is mostly about any practical affair that happens to engage their attention. After one death it was about the expected visit of the district officer to collect taxes, a very momentous affair in the life of the native, but having nothing to do with the recent death. Each day the men eat together in the cemetery. The women prepare the food together and remain in the compound to eat, but not with the men, instead of returning to their own house to eat, as they usually do. Some of these people are observing food taboos. The taboo is on eating taro, the staple food of the native, and is observed by parents or children, brothers or sisters, and husband or wife. This taboo is kept until a few days before the mourners go back to their ordinary sleeping arrangements, and its end is also marked with a feast, when one of those observing the taboo hits a baked pig on the back before it is cut up for the feast. The hitting of the pig is a signal that the taboo is lifted. If dance rehearsals happen to have been in progress they are discontinued for about ten days after the death.[10] A brother gives the signal for the resumption of the dance rehearsals by sounding the *kolamuth* (a hollowed tree trunk used as a drum). The native evidently makes a distinction between the

[10]Dance rehearsals are carried on for months before a rite, of which they are a part, is held.

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stones, and when these are hot they are leveled and the food put between them. Leaves and sand are then put over it, and the food remains there until it is baked. Men are working in groups of two or three, but not very continuously, wrapping a fish or a pig in leaves preparatory to baking, or bringing in leaves from the bush to wrap around the food. Their work in this connection is never as steady as the women's work. A man may tend to the liga and then loll around for a half hour or more, until there is something else to do. Frequently the men will take care of the babies, while the mothers scrape the taro. The main work of cooking falls upon the women; although the men do assist, this does not break into the sexual division of labor.

When the women have finished preparing the taro (for a big feast this takes at least three or four hours), and after it has been placed in the liga, the ground on which they have been working is cleaned and they take their ease. Until now they have been working seriously and without stopping, except perhaps to nurse a baby. There has been no talking except for the necessary remarks about the taro. Now they sit in the same place smoking their pipes and chatting. Gossip is exchanged, jokes are told and followed with appreciative laughter, and here and there a woman is engaged in the pastime of searching for lice in a friend's or relative's hair. If a woman of the village has just become pregnant, there will be playful fighting between the women of the opposite moieties. This part of the pregnancy rites occurs whenever there is a group of women present. The men in the meantime are a short distance away, on the beach, in the compound in front of the men's house or some other house, in groups of two or three, smoking and chatting but not in any large group. This period—while the food is baking in the liga—is an easy, convivial, feminine communal occasion, as is the eating which follows for the men.

Description of Feast

Three or four hours later, when the food has been baked, the men and boys carry it in their hands into the cemetery. For the men the cemetery serves as a banqueting hall and most of the men's ritual feasts are held there.[11] Women are never permitted in the cemetery for a feast, or at any other time, except at a burial, and then they leave immediately after the interment.[12]

[11] The economic feasts in payment to workers are not always held in the cemetery, and the malanggon ones are held in a special structure erected for them. The connection of eating in the cemetery with mortuary beliefs must be considered at another time.

[12] However, I was invited to all the feasts, and the invitations were always accepted.

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ing rites were given bundles of baked sago. The chief called out their names and the sago was given to them. This "marked" them as those who would sell pig for the future rites. The names of some women were called, and when the feast was over they came up to the cemetery to get their sago.

Gift Exchange

The feast is not only the time for payments and arrangements for future trading, but also for gifts. Usually not all the pigs are consumed at the feasts, and large portions, a head or half the body, will be presented to some one present. Sometimes this is a return gift for a present of half a pig which had been made six months ago, or perhaps it is a new gift to a man, who will return it at another feast. The gifts are always made ceremonially, the name of the recipient being called, and then the piece of pig is handed to him by one of the "waiters."

Discussion

At the end of the feast other matters of importance and current interest are discussed. If dance rehearsals are in progress, one man will make a speech exhorting the men to dance well and to practice rigorously. Or the chief may map out plans for a coming big feast, that is, when they will bring in the bananas to be buried in the sand,[13] when they will fish, what day the women will prepare the taro, etc. Or perhaps, as happened at one feast I attended, the weather was the subject of discussion. The rainy season (time of northwest monsoon) had begun, and for several weeks there had been a deluge of rain. Everyone was disgusted at having to slide about in the wet mud, and much more serious was the threatened danger to the taro crops. After the men had finished eating, the old and rather famous rain magician, Bullagot, made a long speech, encouraging the men and telling them that the excessive amount of rain was due to the magician of a neighboring village, but that he would counteract this by making his own magic to stop the rain. He was followed by other old men, all making speeches of a similar nature, exhorting people not to be downhearted, saying that Bullagot would stop the rain. The younger men listened and were impressed. It was not unlike a Biblical scene where the ancient prophets encouraged the people in a time of famine or other hardship.

Occasionally a concluding speech is made, although this does not happen very frequently. At the feast to make arrangements for buying the pigs for the future malanggon rites, the chief made a concluding speech, during

[13] Bananas are buried in the sand on the beach about a week previous to a feast. The resulting banana is very soft and squashy.